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**BULLETIN
OF THE
CENTER FOR
CHILDREN'S
BOOKS**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED
WITH ANNOTATIONS

- * Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
- R Recommended.
- Ad Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
- M Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
- NR Not recommended.
- SpC Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
- SpR A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.

Except for pre-school years, reading range is given for grade rather than for age of child.

C.U. Curricular Use.

D.V. Developmental Values.

* * *

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Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO • GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL

Volume 39

JUNE, 1986

Number 10

New Titles for Children and Young People

Adoff, Arnold. *Sports Pages*; illus. by Steve Kuzma. Lippincott, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-397-32103-1; Trade ed. ISBN 0-397-32102-3. 74p. Library ed. \$10.89; Trade ed. \$11.50.

R
3-6 Soft, grayed pictures that are remarkable for the economy of line with which the artist shows action reflect the range of sports in Adoff's poems and the diversity of emotions and experiences they portray. The poems are in the voices of young athletes of both sexes, and they capture hope or despair, excitement or exhaustion, the bonding in a team sport, the isolation of the single participant. Adoff writes with a control of structure that never impedes the movement of the poem. This is one of his best collections.

Bograd, Larry. *Travelers*. Lippincott, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-397-32129-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-397-32128-7. 184p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95.

Ad
7-10 Jack Karlstad, a high school senior, is the narrator of an adolescent novel in which a joy-trip taken with a friend is paralleled by an inner journey of discovery and adjustment. Although the story has adequate pace and intermittent insight, it is weakened by its patent and occasionally obtrusive message. Jack's father had been eager to enlist for service in the Vietnam War and had been killed. Jack has never quite understood his father's motivation or forgiven him for leaving his family. Citing a series of letters from his father to his mother, and visiting veterans or the wives of veterans who had known his father, Jack learns how the ardent patriot had become a disillusioned soldier, and when Jack gets home, he declares himself a conscientious objector in a letter to his draft board. The story has some effective familial relationships and a sturdy romance. The trip Jack and his friend take (Colorado to California) affords opportunity for raunchy talk that never translates into action, some boys-will-be-wild byplay, and a few episodes that contribute to neither theme, plot, nor sub-plots.

D.V. Pacific attitudes; Self confidence

Beisner, Monika. *Secret Spells & Curious Charms*; comp. and illus. by Monika Beisner. Farrar, 1986. ISBN 0-374-36692-6. 30p. \$12.95.

R
2-5 Luminous illustrations emanate an electric power from these cream-colored pages, each of which centers on a mystical chant or magic incantation. Beisner's colors are intense, her detail inventive, her lines precise, her page design richly varied and pleasing. These artistic features alone will absorb children's attention, but the verses also will attract a special breed of imagination at the stage where imaginative play blooms into dramatic enactments of stories that call on spells. Young "pretenders" can draw on this the way budding detectives turn to code books, and older fantasy buffs will enjoy it as well.

D.V. Imaginative powers

Berger, Gilda. *Women, Work, and Wages*. Watts, 1986. ISBN 0-531-10074-X. 122p. illus. with photographs. \$10.90.

Ad Although this is well-organized and up-to-date, the writing is extremely dry, with the
7-10 tone more of a statistical report than of a balanced presentation of facts with their human impact. Each of six chapters zeros in on a different aspect of women's economic oppression, including the kinds of jobs women are encouraged, trained, and directed to take; unequal pay and benefits; sexual harassment; and current trends in labor and law. Fact sheets and charts are abundant, photographs satisfactory. A list of adult books for further reading is appended, along with addresses of organizations for further information, and an index. More useful for quick current events reports than long-range, socio-economic perspective.

C.U. Economics

Brunhoff, Laurent de. *Babar's Coloring Book*; written and illus. by Laurent de Brunhoff. Random House, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-394-97517-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-394-87517-6. 30p. Library ed. \$7.99; Trade ed. \$6.95.

R In an oversize book, bright paintings of animals fill the pages but do not crowd them,
2-4 as the counting procedure is fitted nicely into a modest story about a familiar elephant
yrs. family and their friend Zephir, the monkey. The three children of Babar go for an educational walk. In the first double-page spread they see a bird; in the second, they see two balloons, and so on. To reinforce the digit, the word, and the objects, each spread shows Zephir in the corner of a page, holding up the appropriate number of fingers. The children learn, their royal papa is pleased, he shows them how to count to twenty, and he gives each of the children an imposing certificate. A very nice job of teaching counting in a palatable and practical way.

Childress, Valerie. *Drill Team is for Me*; written by Valerie Childress and Jane Nelson; illus. with photographs by David Peterson. Lerner, 1986. ISBN 0-8225-1148-7. 45p. \$7.95.

Ad "Hello! My name is Alison/My favorite sport is drill team," the text begins, and it
4-6 follows Alison in print and pictures (photographs, often stiffly posed) as she learns the commands and movements for a drill team performance. This is not impressive either in the quality of the writing nor in the usefulness of the photographs, but the book does provide elementary facts about drill team participation and it gives advice on a healthful regime and tips on showmanship. A list of "drill team words" is appended.

C.U. Physical education

Christian, Mary Blount. *Merger on the Orient Expressway*; illus. by Kathleen C. Howell. Dutton, 1986. ISBN 0-525-44231-6. \$9.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad An easy mystery for reluctant readers combines, rather haphazardly, several elements
3-5 of humor as Fenton P. Smith and his sidekick, Gerald Grubbs, figure out who is slipping information to Fenton's mother's rival company to undercut her bids. The home-front humor revolves around Fenton's mother's bad cooking (mushroom-rutabaga-collard-green pie) when her business is in trouble. The school humor revolves around a concurrent Egyptian project (Fenton mummifies his teddy bear in bandages, Gerald blows sand with a fan). The peer humor involves an obnoxious female rival with a pink bow. The actual mystery-plot humor involves Fenton's trying to take apart and reassemble a typewriter. Each of these is funny and will amuse readers, but none is sufficiently developed or related to the others.

Conly, Jane Leslie. *Racso and the Rats of NIMH*; illus. by Leonard B. Lubin. Harper, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-021362-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-021361-2. 278p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$12.50.

R 5-8 In this sequel to *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* by Robert O'Brien (Conly's Father), the super-intelligent rats have established their new home at Thorn Valley, and fieldmouse Timothy, featured in the first book, is a student at their school. On his way to the valley after summer vacation, Timothy meets Racso, a hip young city rat, fond of rock 'n' roll and Hershey bars. As does *Mrs. Frisby*, this book contains many small trials and adventures, which then come together in a grave crisis—here, ecological disaster and threatened destruction of the rats' home when humans build a dam to turn Thorn Valley into a recreation area. Conly has completely mastered the bucolic tone of the first book, adding humor with Racso's classroom antics, city slicker attitudes, and crush on the disdainful Isabella. Much of Racso's mischief is a mask of bravado, covering both his feelings of inferiority around the other rats, and a shameful secret: Racso's father is Jenner, leader of the rats who left the new community. Characterizations all around are more detailed than in O'Brien's book, which really should be read first. Short, fast-pace chapters make this an excellent classroom read-aloud.

Craig, Helen. *A Welcome for Annie*; written and illus. by Helen Craig. Knopf, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-394-97954-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-394-97854-6. 25p. Library ed. \$9.99; Trade ed. \$7.95.

Ad 3-5 yrs. First published in England, this is an addition to a series of books about Susie and Alfred, piglets who are neighbors. Mischievous, the two plan an ambush (dampening but not dangerous) for the new piglet on the block, Annie, since they have decided that she is snobbish and they don't like her. Annie proves, however, to be just as devious as Susie and Alfred, and she insists that her little brother go into the tent that has a sign "Welcome Annie!" So little Fred has water dumped on him, and Annie's enjoyment is such that her two peers immediately realize that she's their kind of girl. The illustrations are mildly humorous and not cluttered, but otherwise undistinguished. The read-aloud audience may enjoy the malice, but it's hardly exemplary in a one-gag story not balanced by other attitudes or incidents, although it's adequate in simplicity and scope.

Crutcher, Chris. *Stotan!* Greenwillow, 1986. ISBN 0-688-05715-2. 183p. \$10.25.

R 8-12 In journal form, Walker Dupree recounts the week-long marathon that forever bonds his team of four high school swimmers under the tough direction of their Korean coach. Each of the boys develops emotionally as well as physically through the rigorous testing for strength, endurance, and commitment. Nortie exorcises the ghost of his brother, driven to suicide by their abusive father, and leaves home himself. The narrator sorts out his relationships with two girl friends and eventually, his calling as a writer. Lionel, living alone since his parents' death in an accident, supports rambunctious Jeff through what turns out to be a terminal illness. A subplot involving the boys' fight against local Neo-Nazi activists provides some immediate action, while the various characters' conflicts tighten the middle and ending. The pace lags through the story's introductions; nevertheless, this is a searching sports novel, with a tone varying from macho-tough to sensitive.

C.U. Physical education

D.V. Courage; Friendship values

Devaney, John. *Winners of the Heisman Trophy*. Walker, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-6631-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-6610-2. 120p. illus. with photographs. Library ed. \$12.85; Trade ed. \$12.95.

Ad 6-9 In 1935, when Jay Berwanger of the University of Chicago won the first trophy given for outstanding performance in college football, the award was called the Downtown Athletic Club Trophy. John Heisman, who had been instrumental in establishing the award, died shortly thereafter and the trophy was renamed in his honor. This is part of

the background information presented in the first chapter of the book; the remainder is given over to brief biographies of selected Heisman Trophy winners, each of which begins with a game sequence, drops that at an exciting point for a life history, and goes back to pick up the action and continue to a triumphant conclusion. The style is flat and the tone often laudatory, but the game accounts should appeal to football fans. Photographs and an index are provided.

Florian, Douglas. *Discovering Butterflies*. ISBN 0-684-18439-7.

Discovering Trees. ISBN 0-684-18566-0. Both books are written and illus. by Douglas Florian; Scribner, 1986; 30p. \$10.95.

R
5-7
yrs.

The full-color illustrations distinguish both of Florian's books from treatments that are more mundane pictorially, or from the realistic tenor of photographs. These are accurate but rivetting in color and composition. In fact, *Trees*, in addition to inspiring immediate interest in going out to identify neighborhood varieties (or to count rings), has an extremely cohesive text that describes, in a simple-enough-to-read-aloud style, the reproduction cycle and development from seed to sugar manufacture. The butterfly life cycle and characteristics are also clearly explained, and both books wind up on a note of ecological awareness. A fine start toward an aesthetic and scientific appreciation of the natural world.

C.U. Biology; Botany

Ford, Barbara. *Keeping Things Cool: The Story of Refrigeration and Air Conditioning*. Walker, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-6616-1; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-6635-8. 60p. illus. (Inventions That Changed Our Lives) Library ed. \$10.95; Trade ed. \$10.85.

R
5-7

The subject may be more useful than exciting, but the text—direct in style, carefully organized, and both specific and sequential in development—is smoothly readable. Ford discusses the uses of natural ice and cooling devices from ancient times until the ice-making machines of the 19th century were succeeded by mechanical devices such as refrigerators, freezers, and air conditioners, all of which created new comfort in any kind of enclosed space and made it possible to make major changes within the food industry. A final chapter considers some unusual uses of cooling substances: cleaning the Statue of Liberty with liquid nitrogen, using liquid oxygen in making steel, improving reception from communications satellites, etc. An index is provided.

C.U. Industries (unit)

Gibbons, Gail. *From Path to Highway: The Story of the Boston Post Road*; written and illus. by Gail Gibbons. Crowell, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04514-X; Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04513-1. 31p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95.

R
1-3

In an interesting departure from her usual books, Gail Gibbons describes the evolution of the three post roads between Boston and New York. Beginning with the Indian trails, she shows the important role the roads played in the developing New England colonies. Modes of transportation change—from foot to horse to wagons and stagecoaches, trains, and "*Honk! Too!* It's 1920 and the road is busy again. The automobile is here." Gibbons gives the story human interest with descriptions of individuals who traveled the roads, including Sarah Knight, who rode her horse along the southern route in 1704 and composed a clever quatrain upon her return: "... Over great rocks and many stones/God has presarv'd from fracter'd bones." The clear, factual, and deliberate text is matched by completely charming illustrations. With gentle lines and bright colors, Gibbons shows both individual scenes filled with detail, and map-like spreads of the region in different times and seasons, often using the naive perspective characteristic of folk landscape painting. A wonderful introduction to roads, transportation, history, progress.

C.U. History—U.S.—Pictorial presentation

Goldberg, Bob. *Diving Basics*; illus. by Art Seiden and with photographs. Prentice-Hall, 1986. ISBN 0-13-215963-5. 48p. \$10.95.

R
4-7
*
Profusely illustrated by useful step-by-step diagrams, this book of advice and instruction by a college swim coach provides a great deal of information about diving technique and the mechanics of diving. There is also background material on general rules for training, a chapter on the rules and procedures in competitive diving, and many helpful tips on individual aspects of the whole diving pattern: board work, entry, or controlling or stopping body-spin, etc. The one-page index is in deplorably small type.
C.U. Physical education; Recreation

Grifalconi, Ann. *The Village of Round and Square Houses*; written and illus. by Ann Grifalconi. Little, 1986. ISBN 0-316-32862-6. 31p. \$14.95.

R
4-7
yrs.
*
An exceptional blend of scene setting, story-telling, and complementary illustration opens with a narrator recollecting her isolated but happy childhood in the west African village of Tos. Here the men live in square houses, the women in round ones, and after a lively description of a typical evening meal together, the narrator recalls the story of how the hut arrangement began, as told by her grandmother. This complex framework of a tale within a generational flashback evolves smoothly, and the actual story is a dramatic one involving an erupting volcano (Mother Naka), some climactic poetical passages, rhythmic sound effects, and rich scenarios of cultural peace and prosperity, with a bit of universal philosophizing thrown in ("each one has a place to be apart, and a time to be together..."). The art is beautifully modulated in color and textural effects, with striking organic patterns and natural sweeps of line. The sharp explosion sequence gives way to ashy gray/brown monotones after Mother Naka's eruption, swinging slowly back into earth colors and finally normally intense everyday hues. An involving experience for children and adults alike.

C.U. Storytelling

D.V. International understanding

Grimm, Jakob Ludwig Karl. *Godfather Cat and Mousie*; ad. by Doris Orgel; illus. by Ann Schweninger. Macmillan, 1986. ISBN 0-02-768690-6. 32p. \$11.95.

R
3-6
yrs.
This has always been a troubling tale, with its stark warning of what happens to gullible mice who are foolish enough to set up housekeeping with a cat. However, that's its power as well. Orgel has offered an alternative to the mouse's being peremptorily gobbled up, a sort of choose-your-own-ending ("some people say..." but "I say..."). Mousie escapes through a hole she has gnawed in hunger to find a new home with her rodent relatives, and the cat is left forever watching shamefaced beside that mousehole. To this end, the story itself has been slightly altered to foreshadow the escape, but otherwise, the abridgment does maintain close ties to the Grimms' version. Schweninger's earthtone colors are subtly blended with simply defined linework, graceful shapes, and artfully framed compositions. There's a real world established in this art, serene on the surface, slightly menacing underneath, but ultimately orderly. A carefully—but nonetheless strategically—reshaped version, more attractive to most parents, less forceful as folklore.

Hess, Lilo. *Secrets in the Meadow*; written and illus. with photographs by Lilo Hess. Scribner, 1986. ISBN 0-684-18525-3. 64p. \$13.95.

R
4-6
With graceful style and scientific attention to detail, Hess catalogues the wildlife of a meadow, including deer, rabbits, mice, and other mammals, but with special emphasis on bugs and insects. The characteristics of many of the latter will have natural appeal for the intended age group, which will relish descriptions of the ambush bug sucking its

victims dry, the stink bug spraying its surroundings, or the click bug snapping straight up into the air from its back. Black-and-white photographs are clear and involving. After one's submergence in the text, the conclusion comes as a shock when surveyors invade the area for work on a housing development. Hess' last page of questions ("Where will all the animals go?") gives readers pause for serious environmental thought. A glossary and index are appended.

C.U. Biology

Hughes, Shirley. *Here Comes Charlie Moon*; written and illus. by Shirley Hughes. Lothrop, 1986. ISBN 0-688-06401-9. 143p. \$10.25.

R
3-5 This vacation adventure story, which takes place in a British resort town that has seen better days, is as insubstantial as a French farce or a wave of sea-spray, but it's just as funny as the former and as refreshing as the latter. Visiting his Auntie Jean, Charlie (who appears, in the deft sketches that top each page, to be about ten) becomes involved with some ex-show-biz characters, what appears to be a compounding of crimes, and the start of a romance that blossoms into marriage for two of the ex-performers, and generally has a spirited visit during which he proves his honesty, valor, and good nature. Brisk, wholesome, diverting.

Hurwitz, Johanna. *Yellow Blue Jay*; illus. by Donald Carrick. Morrow, 1986. ISBN 0-688-06078-1. 112p. \$10.25.

R
3-4 Jay Koota is a pudgy archconservative: he likes school, model airplanes, and orderly control in life; he doesn't like swimming, over-exertion, creepy-crawly things, and irregularities of any kind, especially in meals. Thus a family vacation in Vermont with two other children he doesn't know raises apprehensions, which, it turns out, are sometimes justified but more often overcome. By his return to New York, Jay has climbed a mountain, captured a bat singlehanded, cooked shishkabob, made a new friend, floated on his back, dropped a few pounds, and picked up some confidence. The point of view here is all. Hurwitz has a keen sense of an 8-year-old's fears and insecurities, revealed in natural dialogue and action. The scope is carefully limited for maximum characterization in minimum space.

D.V. Fear, overcoming; Self-confidence

Ichikawa, Satomi. *Nora's Castle*; written and illus. by Satomi Ichikawa. Putnam, 1986. ISBN 0-399-21302-3. 32p. \$12.95.

R
4-6 yrs. A childhood idyll has Nora bicycling out to explore a deserted old castle with her doll, teddy bear, and dog. The adventure is never as ominous as the creak of the iron gate might imply; Nora talks to ancestral paintings, plays a dusty piano, explores an attic full of dress-up clothes, and sets up a dinner party for the animal inhabitants (owl, toad, spider, bat, rabbit, etc.), even snuggling to sleep overnight in the tower's soft hay. The story is a bit artificial, but it's never pretentious, and the watercolor paintings, framed in ovals or arching windows, are delicately textured and verdantly tinted. Besides its aesthetic appeal, this is an open invitation to defuse children's fear of the old and unusual.

D.V. Imaginative powers

Jakes, John. *Susanna of the Alamo: A True Story*; illus. by Paul Bacon. Harcourt, 1986. ISBN 0-15-200592-7. 28p. \$13.95.

Ad
2-4 Susanna Dickinson's survival of the Alamo massacre is inherently dramatic, so it is unfortunate that the author feels compelled to heighten effects with stylistic devices ("Such a short battle. Nearly over by six-fifteen in the morning.") and information-

loaded dialogue ("But then Santa Anna became President. He took away our rights," Susanna's husband comments to her on the wall of the embattled fort). Although Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and other leaders have had their share of praise, the women and children of the Alamo have gotten scant attention, and the recognition of their support and suffering is welcome despite the flawed text. The information is thoroughly researched and the pen-and-wash drawings, while occasionally stiff in portraying the characters close-up, give a colorful, encompassing sweep to the events.

C.U. History—U.S.—Pictorial presentation
D.V. Courage; Patriotism

Jones, Diana Wynne. *Howl's Moving Castle*. Greenwillow, 1986. ISBN 0-688-06233-4. 212p. \$10.25.

R
6-9 This has a more deliberate pace than most of the author's earlier books, but it has the same ebullient writing style and yeasty humor, and the same kind of whole, rounded conception of a fantasy world as have distinguished its predecessors. It is unusual in that the protagonist, Sophie, spends most of the long story as a woman of ninety, because she is under a spell cast by a wicked witch. The witch pits her powers against those of the wizard Howl, into whose (literally) moving castle Sophie enters to find a home and learn the truth about Howl. Reputed to suck the souls from young girls, Howl proves to be only a woman-charmer. It will come as a surprise to few readers that, after chapters of adventure, magic, danger, and other facets of sturm-und-drang, all curses and spells are removed and Sophie and Howell (Howl) discover themselves to be in love. Meanwhile, all readers have been able to have a romp. A funny book.

Kramer, Stephen P. *Getting Oxygen: What Do You Do if You're Cell Twenty-Two?* illus. by Felicia Bond. Crowell, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04518-2; Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04517-4. 53p. Library ed. \$10.89; Trade ed. \$10.95.

R
3-5 The logical development of ideas, moving from the more familiar to the less, and the simplified vocabulary both attest to the author's experience as a science teacher. Kramer explains why living things need oxygen to survive, and he describes the several ways in which different life forms obtain oxygen. There's a slightly gimmicky device (Suppose you were chased by a giant mosquito. . . *can* there be a giant mosquito?) used at the beginning of the text, but the rest is straightforward in approach as in style. An index and five titles suggested for further reading are appended to a good example of a brisk, informative science book.

C.U. Science

Lambert, Mark. *Living in the Future*. Bookwright Press/Watts, 1986. ISBN 0-531-18040-9. 47p. illus. \$10.40.

Ad
3-5 In this volume of the publisher's series, "Tomorrow's World," more than half the page space is devoted to diagrams, drawings, and color photographs. The text covers such topics as future developments in transportation and in energy sources and use, and several chapters cover aspects of tomorrow's homes: energy-saving or storing, construction, design, and automation in the home. A brief glossary and index and a six-title reading list are provided for a text that is choppy in style and superficial in coverage but that may stimulate readers' interest in technology and may be accessible to readers with a short attention span since the coverage of each topic is brief.

C.U. Social studies

Landau, Elaine. *Different Drummer: Homosexuality in America*. Messner, 1986. ISBN 0-671-54997-9. 103p. \$10.29.

Ad 8-12 Rather than an introduction, this book is a political argument. Calling homosexuality a "viable life-style alternative," Landau has some rather harsh things to say about the heterosexual majority: "Another factor inherent in the widespread existence of homophobia is the perception of the homosexual's life style as an arrogant challenge to the structure of our society." "Our society operates on the false assumption that everyone is basically striving for his or her share of the same advantages." Landau is entitled to her premises, but she would do better to acknowledge them as such, rather than presenting them as unquestionable fact. The documentation is sometimes vague ("Some homosexual organizations have stressed. . ."). While Landau's chapter on homosexuality and the mental health profession is well documented, she here (and elsewhere in the book) ignores evidence that would weaken her case: the APA's 1973 decision to end classifying homosexuality as an illness was, and continues to be, the subject of controversy within the psychiatric profession. The best parts of this book are case histories and long quotes from gay teens and adults, whose straightforward, personal stories (of first love, telling one's parents, being a lesbian mother) convey powerfully the problems and triumphs of being a homosexual in America today. A sketchy bibliography and an index are appended.

Leighner, Alice Mills. *Reynard: The Story of a Fox Returned to the Wild*; written and illus. with photographs by Alice Mills Leighner. Atheneum, 1986. ISBN 0-689-31189-3. 48p. \$11.95.

Ad 3-5 Black-and-white photographs of pedestrian quality illustrate a text about a very young red fox that was found by a motorist, turned over to an animal shelter, and placed with one of the volunteers in a society called Wildcare. The goals are to help small or injured animals so that they can become independent in the wild. This gives some information about the love, patience, and care lavished on a foundling animal, but the writing style is flat albeit direct. Not substantial, but the photographs show an appealing animal, and the text may foster a respect for wild creatures.

D.V. Animals, kindness to

Lichtman, Wendy. *Telling Secrets*. Harper, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-023885-2; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-023884-4. 243p. Library ed. \$12.89; Trade ed. \$13.50.

R 7-10 College student Toby is stunned with dismay and disbelief when her mother tells her she must take a solemn oath not to tell anyone else that Dad is in jail as an embezzler. It is hard not to tell her best friend and roommate Sharon, especially because perspicacious Sharon knows something is wrong; it's also hard for Toby to understand why she blurted the truth out to Richard, with whom she'd had sexual relations on their one date. Then Toby learns another family secret (a beloved cousin tells her he's attempted suicide, a fact his parents elided), and she begins to examine more closely the pattern of evasion and pretense in her extended family and to consider the conflict between family loyalty and her own needs of emotional stability and conscience. This has depth in its portrayal of characters and their relationships, candor in approach and style, and an insight into the complexities of self-analysis that reflect the author's being a professor of psychology.

D.V. Ethical concepts; Family relations; Friendship values

Luenn, Nancy. *Arctic Unicorn*. Atheneum, 1986. ISBN 0-689-31278-4. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R 6-9 Thirteen-year-old Kala begins experiencing stirrings of supernatural power, but she resists becoming angakok, or shaman, until her people's need turns her from the path of ordinary courtship and forces her to practice shape-changing and intercession with the spirit world. The novel's description of Kala's exploits as actual rather than visionary is vivid and convincing, though sometimes repetitive, as she pursues the mystical

silak (arctic unicorn) as a wolf, seal, lemming, or bird. Her two suitors obviously represent the virtue of the old ways versus the destructiveness of the white man's weapons and disrespect for the spirits of sea, land, and animal life. In spite of its unvaried pace, this is revealing of family relationships, customs, and folklore among the Inuit and has, in addition, imaginative depth.

D.V. Individuality, expressing

McDonnell, Christine. *Count Me In*. Viking, 1986. ISBN 0-670-80417-7. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad 6-8 The summer after eighth grade, which Katie expected to be one of pleasurable indolence, turned out to be a summer of change, adjustment, and adaptation. She was only just beginning to accept her new stepfather, when he and Mom announced that they were having a baby. Maybe she could live with her bachelor father? But a visit with him made it clear that, although he loved her dearly, he was not ready (partly because of often-sudden photographic assignments out of town) to assume paternal responsibility. This has believable characters, strong ethical concepts, a smooth writing style, and some material about boy and girl friends to balance the story's focus on a child's divorce-induced feelings of insecurity. It's an often-used theme, and neither the situation nor its development is unusual here.

D.V. Adaptability; Self-confidence; Stepparents, adjustment to

McGrath, Patrick. *The Lewis and Clark Expedition*. Silver Burdett, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-382-06828-9; Trade ed. ISBN 0-382-06975-7. 64p. illus. (Turning Points in American History) Library ed. \$10.45; Trade ed. \$13.96.

R 5-8 A straightforward, competently written account follows the first two white men to make the round trip between the east and west coasts of the U.S. The preparations, President Jefferson's charge to the leaders, and the departure from St. Louis all precede a careful tracing of the route and events along the way, including relations with various native American tribes, the role of Sacagawea, the difficulties of food gathering and transport, and the bitter winter that awaited the group once they reached the Pacific Ocean. Descriptions of their homeward trek, ultimate achievements, and fates of various members complete the book, which is well-illustrated with maps, photographs, reproductions of diary entries, paintings, and Indian artifacts. A thought-provoking conclusion gives some perspective on the damage done to Indian populations by the frontier settlement that was spearheaded by the expedition. A strong research resource, interesting to couple with Scott O'Dell's recent fiction, *Streams to the River, River to the Sea: A Novel of Sacagawea*, reviewed in the April issue.

C.U. History—U.S. Discovery and exploration

Maloney, Ray. *The Impact Zone*. Delacorte, 1986. ISBN 0-385-29447-6. \$14.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad 9-12 Fifteen-year-old Jim can't stand Larry, his "slime" stepfather, so different from his real father Bill, a peripatetic surfer-photographer. When things become too hot at home (Larry and Jim's mother have discovered that Jim's been having sex), Jim lights out to see his father in Hawaii. One of the strongest scenes is Jim's adventure-filled bike ride to the L.A. airport, sixty miles from his home. The characters—especially Larry and Bill—are credibly developed, and Maloney has captured, in Jim's voice, just the right tone of teenage alienation. While the plotting is swift, it is rather predictable, as Jim finds manhood in riding the perfect wave and in painting the perfect picture of the perfect wave. The resolution is a twist—Jim's mother decides life with Larry is indeed dull and moves to Hawaii—and makes a nice ending to what is closer to a surfer's dream than a realistic novel.

D.V. Family relations

Marshall, James. *Wings: A Tale of Two Chickens*; written and illus. by James Marshall. Viking, 1986. ISBN 0-670-80961-6. 32p. \$11.95.

R
3-6
yrs. Chickens are *in* this season (see Tusa, *Chicken* in this issue and the tale of Alaric Chicken in Sharmat's *Hooray for Mother's Day*, April issue), and they're holding up well as a picturebook staple. This is a portrait of Harriet and Winnie, the former a reader, the latter generally bored out of her mind until one day a fox (Mr. Johnson) lures her into his pink and green balloon. ("Didn't she *know* it was a fox?" inquire the neighbors. "She never reads," replies Harriet.) In a zany series of events, Winnie escapes while her captor is picking up a package of instant dumplings, is recaptured by the fox disguised as a chicken, and is rescued by Harriet disguised as a fox. Marshall's pictures are even roomier and more expressive than usual in a story perfectly suited for the young audience who has just discovered the difference between chickens and foxes and who will therefore delight in these sly reversals. Theatre of the absurd at its most basic level, with vivid color sets.

Mason, Anne. *The Stolen Law*. Harper, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-024119-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-024118-7. 218p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$12.50.

Ad
6-9 In a sequel to *The Dancing Meteorite* (reviewed in the January, 1985 issue) Kira, a gifted exo-communicator of the future, is professionally bound to silence by sector status, i.e. an interplanetary law. This silence has made it difficult to deal with the Vallusian commander to whom she's been assigned, since she cannot explain to him what she knows or what caused her mother, an old friend he has considered a traitor, to take a path over which the Vallusian has been bitter. Kidnapped by a leader of a hostile alien culture, Kira escapes, steals a vessel, and attempts—before she is caught and tried—to see that justice is done. Like the first book, this has plenty of action, an appealing protagonist, and a wholly conceived fantasy world. It is weakened by uneven pace and what seems a plethora of place and proper names, cultural patterns, and conflicts within a complex interplanetary cosmology.

D.V. Ethical concepts

Marston, Elsa. *Mysteries in American Archeology*. Walker, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-6627-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-6608-0. 115p. illus. with photographs. Library ed. \$13.85; Trade ed. \$13.95.

Ad
6-9 Marston, whose qualification as a writer on this topic seems to be that she has participated in two digs, discusses theories about the first inhabitants of the North American continent and about the tribal cultures as they can be understood from dating and analysis of fossils and artifacts. Like any book about exploratory excavations, this has inherent drama; it gives a considerable amount of information about archeological sites and discoveries. It is weakened by some repetition, by some careless writing ("hieroglyphics" rather than "hieroglyphs," for example), and by a recurrent stress on the mysterious nature of a finding about which there is more conjecture than knowledge. A glossary, an index, and a list—by chapters—of archeological sites open to the public are appended.

Mayne, William. *Drift*. Delacorte, 1986. ISBN 0-385-29446-8. 166p. \$14.95.

R
5-9 Rafe is swept into immediate adventure when the Indian girl Tawena takes him to "go get look at bear. Bear my people father." The two become caught in a fishing shack on the frozen lake, the bear patiently breaking in: "It began to bite the corners of the hut, high up the wall, and right down at the bottom." But in an eerie, not quite supernatural moment, the bear breaks down the door and then is separated from the hut as the ice breaks, bear and hut floating in different directions. Rafe and Tawena land on an inhospitable shore ("Land of bears, all ever bears") and Tawena, sensing the

approach of two hostile Indian women, takes Rafe's knife and deserts him. He is captured by the women, journeying with them through the wilderness to, he thinks, a life of slavery. We don't quite know where or when this historical novel is set (there is a reference to fighting the French), but it's a terrific survival story, as Mayne meticulously details the skills Rafe learns to gain the approval of the Indians. There are many instances when Rafe questions the reality around him, particularly during the attack of the "Wendagoo," a shower of branches, animals, and fishes; and his disorientation is heightened by the noncommittal, sometimes contradictory behavior of the Indians: what are they going to do with him? A second section returns to Tawena's adventures after stealing Rafe's knife; this is anticlimactic and bit jarring. Still, her story is interesting, amplifying and furthering the mystical overtones of the first part.

D.V. Environmental resourcefulness

Miklowitz, Gloria D. *Love Story, Take Three*. Delacorte, 1986. ISBN 0-385-29445-X. 136p. \$14.95.

Ad 6-9 Always under pressure from her ambitious mother and from her agent, teenage Valerie moves from bit parts to a major role in a planned new series. She's always wanted to be a star, so Val's thrilled—except for the fact that she has three problems: she doesn't want to tell her newly-acquired high school boyfriend that she's an actress, she is torn between a desire to get to know the father who's left home (to be an actor) years ago and a feeling of loyalty toward her mother, and she becomes more and more convinced that she'd rather go to college than sign a three-year contract. This is adequately written and the characters are believable if not drawn in depth, but the plot development is uneven, much of it being in a repetitious pattern.

D.V. Education, valuing and seeking

Moran, Tom. *A Family in Ireland*. Lerner, 1986. ISBN 0-8225-1668-3. 30p. illus. with photographs. (Families the World Over) \$8.95.

Ad 2-4 This follows the day-to-day activities of a well-situated Irish family in the Gaeltacht, an area around Galway in which the old Gaelic language and traditions are still strong. Color photographs show the children in school, the father at work, mother shopping, the family cutting turf or enjoying a meal. Although the situation is clearly a well-scrubbed and over-typed one, the pictures are not stiffly posed and the information is accurate. Maps, a facts brief, and a guide to pronouncing difficult Gaelic words add to the travelogue-type text.

C.U. Social studies

Mori, Tuyosi. *Socrates and the Three Little Pigs*; illus. by Mitsumasa Anno. Philomel, 1986. ISBN 0-399-21310-4. 43p. \$12.95.

Ad 3-5 The opening bucolic pictures of pigs at play, two hungry wolves, and a frog should not fool the reader into thinking that this an ordinary fairy tale, particularly when the author is a mathematician, the illustrator Mitsumasa Anno, the wolves named Socrates and Xanthippe, the frog, Pythagoras. Here's the dilemma: Xanthippe is hungry, there are three pigs, and five houses. Which house is most likely to contain dinner? Mori and Anno use the situation to explain the mathematical concepts of combinations and permutations. The red-suited pig could be in the first house, the yellow-suited pig in the second, the red and yellow could both be in the fourth, the blue in the third. Etc. The story is funny (especially Xanthippe's down-to-earth hunger: "Who cares which pig you catch? They all taste alike in the dark, anyway.") and Anno's illustrations of the permutation analysis are colorful, instructive, and, in the spread of the 210 different possibilities, mind-boggling. Some of the analogies drawn to simplify things—a tree

with limbs, three pigs in three chairs—actually cause confusion, and there is a flaw in the book's logic. No matter what the outcomes of the combinatorial calculation, the probability that a given house will be occupied by one, two, or three pigs is the same for all houses. It doesn't matter which house Socrates tries first. However, as the instructive afterword suggests, "one cannot help suspecting that Socrates and Pythagoras may have used their lengthy exploration of the subject to *avoid* having to catch the charming little pigs for greedy Xanthippe to eat!"

C.U. Mathematics (unit)

Mulford, Philippa Greene. *The World is My Eggshell*. Delacorte, 1986. ISBN 0-385-29432-8. 157p. \$14.95.

Ad 7-9 Abbey, the narrator, is sixteen; with her twin brother Sheldon, younger sister Joyce, and mother, she has just moved to a new town because it was so painful to stay in their old home after Dad's death. This is not a story about adjustment to bereavement, however, nor even of the problems of being accepted by a new peer group, but of Abbey's attainment of self-confidence after years of being over-shadowed by Shel, who has always been a popular, confident, and ebullient achiever. There are girls who are rivals and some who are supportive friends; there are a number of boys who are either attractive or attracted; there's increasing prowess at track and gaining enough assurance to take on an editorial assignment. And there is the satisfaction of knowing that Shel is aware of the change. This has adequate writing style and dialogue, and the characters are believable although far from memorable; the story deals with enough problems common to adolescence to appeal to readers, but the story line is weak.

D.V. Adaptability; Death, adjustment to; Jealousy, overcoming; Self-confidence

Nelson, Theresa. *The 25¢ Miracle*. Bradbury, 1986. ISBN 0-02-724370-2. 214p. \$13.95.

R 5-7 Living in the trailer park of a small Texas town, eleven-year-old Elvira and her father, Hank, are not at ease with each other; there are no demonstrations or words of affection, and at times little communication. Widowed, often out of work, Hank yields to the pressure of Elvira's needing more than he can give her. He is unhappy about this, and so is Elvira, who tries to parlay her friendship with a kind, pretty divorcee into acquiring Miss Ivy as a stepmother. It doesn't work, and the banishment to life with overbearing Aunt Darla seems imminent, so Elvira runs away. In a sugar-icing closing sequence, Hank is frantic, realizes how he feels about his child, learns how she feels about leaving him, and sits by her sickbed (fever incurred by exposure) for a happy outcome (no Darla, no separation) and a rare hug. This has a competent writing style, and the perennial appeal of the waif-heroine; it's adequately structured and has believable if rather type-cast characters.

D.V. Father-daughter relations

Osborne, Mary Pope. *Last One Home*. Dial, 1986. ISBN 0-8037-0219-1. 148p. \$13.95.

R 5-7 Subtly, the title can be interpreted either as the last one to leave home or the last one to reach home. For the twelve-year-old narrator, Bailey, everything has gone wrong: her beloved older brother Claude has broken up with a girl Bailey also loves; her father is about to marry a woman (Janet) who is just as awful as her twin boys, and her mother (an alcoholic who lives a few hours away) is uncommunicative on those occasions when Bailey telephones her. Bailey's agony, obduracy, and abortive attempts to influence events are wholly believable; the novel does not explore a new situation in contemporary fiction, but it does an unusually astute job of making a character's ambivalence comprehensible. The writing style has vitality and pace; the dialogue is excellent.

D.V. Brother-sister relations; Stepparents, adjustment to

Oxenbury, Helen. *I Can*. ISBN 0-394-87482-X.

I Hear. ISBN 0-394-87481-1.

I See. ISBN 0-394-87479-X.

I Touch. ISBN 0-394-87480-3. All books are written and illus. by Helen Oxenbury; Random House, 1986; 12p. \$2.95.

R
8-24
mos. Many a board book has come down the pike since Oxenbury's first series (*Family*, etc.) in 1981. She's still one of the best in terms of maintaining simple concepts, lively art, and action generated from object. In *I Touch*, for instance, a picture of a ball is followed by a toddler rolling on it in characteristic play; the tattered blanket blowing dry on the wash line is followed by the pajama-clad child holding it, sucking a thumb with eyes closed in a bliss of softness. *I Hear* has a child clapping hands over ears beside a furiously barking dog, listening to grandfather's watch, and soothing a screaming baby sibling. *I Can* demonstrates typical movements, including stamping, falling, and stretching; and *I See* gently reminds little ones that flowers can be gazed on at ground level without being uprooted, and that a frog and a friend are wondrous sights. Good pickings for parent-sharing with the youngest.

Pack, Janet. *Lost Childhood: Children of World War II*; written by Janet Pack and Margaret Weis. Messner, 1986. ISBN 0-671-50569-6. 130p. illus. with photographs. \$9.79.

M
5-7 The six accounts here are inherently suspenseful and moving, but they have lost much in transition from primary source to story form. The first two focus on Jewish children's experiences of persecution in Nazi-occupied Lodz; the third, on two German children in Berlin; the fourth, on a Latvian family's escape from Soviet troops into Nazi Germany; the fifth on a rescue of German schoolchildren from under a collapsed wall; and the last, on several Berlin children's ruse to save themselves from attack by a Soviet soldier. The writing is often clichéd. ("Her heart beat heavily, rapidly. Tension roared in her ears") and the dialogue is stilted, with efforts at contemporary slang that don't mesh well with the tone of the stories ("Steady there, sis," he said gently"). Although each story is introduced with an explanation for background, there's no general introduction that might counteract the impression given by the emphasis on German children's suffering or on the Soviet threat. There is too much fine literature for children on this subject to lower standards of presentation even for authentic material, if it is not well reported.

C.U. History—World War II—1939–1945

Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw. *Draft Horses*; illus. with photographs by William Munoz. Holiday House, 1986. ISBN 0-8234-0597-4. 86p. \$12.95.

R
5-7 A natural selection for rural libraries, this competently traces the history of draft horses, distinguishes among the prominent breeds, and describes their contributions to farm work, the competitions testing their strength, and some basic points of care and training. Although color photography would have augmented the careful textual references to various breeds markings, the abundant black-and-white photos are clear, well-composed, and handsomely informative. Lists of draft horse publications and sources for more information, a glossary, and an index are appended.

C.U. Rural life

Patz, Nancy. *Gina Farina and the Prince of Mintz*; written and illus. by Nancy Patz. Harcourt, 1986. ISBN 0-15-230815-6. 28p. \$12.95.

R
5-8
yrs. In a text rich with internal rhyme and humorous reversals of fairy tale patterns, a baker's daughter sets off to see the world in company with a troupe of players. In the course of their travels she meets a grouchy prince, defies his command to bake pies for him forever, converts him to a sense of humor, and then proceeds on her journeys, while he stays home to rule more wisely. There's lots of word play here, as well as picture play (one portrait of Gina is a dead ringer for the Mona Lisa). The predominant

tones of rose, brown, and blue strengthen the forceful action and vigorous design. An all-around romp to read aloud.

C.U. Reading aloud

D.V. Independence; Sex roles

Peet, William Bartlett. *Zella, Zack, and Zodiac*; written and illus. by Bill Peet. Houghton, 1986. ISBN 0-395-41069-X. 30p. \$12.95.

Ad Not Peet's neatest effort, this does have the narrative rhyme appeal and ready action
4-6 of all his work but also features several too many syllables in several too many lines,
yrs. along with a fairly disjointed plot. Zella the Zebra saves an abandoned ostrich hatchling, which in turn grows up to save Zella's colt Zodiac, afflicted with excessively (and inexplicably) huge feet that make it prey to hungry lions. Although adult readers will have their mouths full getting around all those words, children will no doubt respond to Peet's sure sense of the ridiculous, as in a double-page spread featuring the black-and-white ostrich rising righteously above the level of the black-and-white striped herd.

Perl, Lila. *Blue Monday and Friday the Thirteenth: The Stories Behind the Days of the Week*; illus. by Erika Weihs. Houghton/Clarion, 1986. ISBN 0-89919-327-7. 96p. \$12.95.

R Clearly intrigued by her subject, Perl in turn interests readers with a neatly spliced
5-7 account of the mythologies, linguistic histories, and customs that have contributed to naming our days of the week. The cumbersome Roman system (imagine Caesar's being stabbed on the "twelfth day before the calends" instead of the ides of March), the derivation of Christians' "Easter" from an Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring, the fear of the number thirteen (triskaidekaphobia), Saturn's eating his children as a metaphor of time creating and destroying life on earth, the tradition of dusting on Thursdays before vacuum cleaners eased household air pollution—all these tidbits will enrich browsers as well as inform them. Young researchers will find out the surprising complexity behind everyday schedules and may be spurred to think about deeper cultural concepts of time as well. Competently researched and written, the book is also cleverly designed, with more than a hint of humor in the handsome black-and-white illustrations, which combine scratchboard and woodblock effects.

C.U. Time concepts

D.V. Everyday life concepts

Powledge, Fred. *You'll Survive: Late Blooming, Early Blooming, Loneliness, Klutziness, and Other Problems of Adolescence, and How to Live Through Them*. Scribner, 1986. ISBN 0-684-18632-2. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad The subtitle says it all. This is vividly descriptive but vague in prescription. The
7-10 author assures readers that every teenager shares common personal insecurities, explains some of the reasons why, and repeats assurances that the stage of adolescence always passes if you just hang in there. The book's main value is the time perspective on which Powledge insists in face of most teenagers' typical impatience. Physical and psychological developments have been covered better elsewhere, but the social and socialization problems get some clarification here.

C.U. Psychology

Rayner, Mary. *Crocodarling*; written and illus. by Mary Rayner. Bradbury, 1986. ISBN 0-02-775770-6. 32p. \$11.95.

Ad Crocodarling is one of those toy friends that never lets down the child who depends
4-6 on it. Crocodarling, for instance, does not like oatmeal for breakfast—just like Sam.
yrs. Crocodarling can't hurry to school because the pavement hurts his feet—so neither can Sam. Crocodarling plays with Sam at school when no one else does and knocks over the yellow paint with his tail when Sam doesn't get a turn at painting soon enough, spills the

milk which Sam doesn't want to drink, threatens the boy who knocks over Sam's sandcastle, and generally proves indispensable. The story is certainly a vivid evocation of childhood experiences, but it's more descriptive than narratively developed. Children will nevertheless recognize themselves in the dynamics of the situation and enjoy figuring out how Sam dispenses with his enemy in the picture he paints and later shows his mother (Crocodarling has eaten the boy who smashed the castle). The full-color illustrations vitalize this as a slice of life, even if the storytelling effects are diffuse.

D.V. Imaginative powers; Love for toy

Roberts, Willo Davis. *The Magic Book*. Atheneum, 1986. ISBN 0-689-31120-6. \$10.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad Therefore when he finds a book of directions for magical spells, his one goal is casting a
4-6 spell that will repel a bully. Oddly, although he's seen the title for such a spell, it then disappears from the book. Alex and his chum try a few other spells which do seem to work; eventually the bully-spell turns up again, the fateful ingredients are mixed, and they work. Or do they? Like every previous spell, there's the alternative possibility of a logical explanation. That the book of the title introduces a fantasy element, there's no question, since there are several episodes in which it moves by itself. This isn't a very convincing blend of realism and fantasy, and although it has some humor and is written with brisk pace and casual flow, it is weaker in structure and development than most of the author's previous books.

Sargeant, Sarah. *Watermusic*. Houghton/Clarion, 1986. ISBN 0-89919-436-2. 120p. \$11.95.

Ad Laura, the narrator, plays first flute in the school orchestra, and it's because of her
5-7 musical ability that she's hired by a neighbor, Mrs. Uhrlander, to help unpack some artifacts and to play. Laura's puzzled; she knows that Mrs. Uhrlander has just come back from an archeological dig—but why the flute? What develops is an eerie unfolding of the music-wakening of a bat-like creature that proves to be a seraph in a state of suspended animation. The music wakes the seraph and gives Mrs. Uhrlander the power of flight; both disappear. The body of his wife is brought home by Mr. Uhrlander, there's mysterious watermusic in the pipes of the house, Mrs. Uhrlander comes to life (it seems she's been in a trance state like the seraph's) and is saved by a little ogre, or orgule, that is a water creature. The writing style is effective and controlled, the characterization and plot less effective; the appeal to readers will probably rest in the arcane Gothic milieu of this horror story with a happy ending.

Seeger, Pete. *Abiyoyo*; illus. by Michael Hays. Macmillan, 1986. ISBN 0-02-781490-4. 46p. \$15.95.

Ad A story adapted from a South African folktale, this follows the fortunes of a boy who
4-6 irritates everyone with his ukelele playing and of his father, who alienates the town by
yrs. making objects disappear (somewhat demonically, as in removing chairs from tired folks about to sit down). After the two are ostracized, they rescue the townspeople by exercising their talents on a marauding giant named Abiyoyo, making him dance till he drops and then disappears. Thereafter the outcasts are lauded as heroes by a singing, celebratory parade. The story has a couple of weak spots: the boy's music and the man's tricks don't seem comparably problematic; there's no preparatory buildup for the giant, who appears artificially in the middle of the story; and there's no reason given for why the boy has to make him lie down so the father's magic will work—it had previously worked on objects and people not lying down. The paintings, on the other hand, make a consistently handsome extension of the story. The colors are rich, the light and dark contrasts playful, the giant suggestively machine-like in conception. The cast of townspeople is self-conscious in ethnic mix, with global representatives communing over card games or tea, but in general, the illustration strengthens the story significantly.

C.U. Storytelling

Seixas, Judith S. *Vitamins: What They Are, What They Do*; illus. by Tom Huffman. Greenwillow, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-06066-8; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-06065-X. 55p. (Read-Alone) Library ed. \$10.88; Trade ed. \$10.25.

R
2-4 In the same easy-to-read series as her books on junk food, alcohol, and tobacco, Seixas explains what vitamins are, how they were discovered, how they work, how they're made, and how to make sure they're included in a balanced diet. As usual, the style here is simple but never cutesy, which is not always true of the accompanying cartoon drawings in black ink and pea-green. A reliable independent reading resource for primary units on health and the human body.

C.U. Health and hygiene

Sharmat, Marjorie Weinman. *For Members Only*. ISBN 0-440-92654-8. *Snobs, Beware*. ISBN 0-440-98092-5. Both books are Dell, 1986; Paper ed. \$2.50; reviewed from galleys.

Ad
6-9 Sharmat's bubbly writing style and humor place her stories of high school social life a notch above most in the school-and-romance genre. These two books, first of a series, are about snobbery among the female students of Palm Canyon High. The first volume is better in pace but fairly formulaic in treatment as newcomer Kim Adler learns that the in-group is Chi Kappa sorority and goes through the stages of envy, delight at being invited to join, and disgust at the selfishness and snobbery of the sorority. To the joy of her nonmember friend Elissa, Kim resigns. In the second book, *Snobs, Beware*, Elissa and Kim establish, with difficulty, a rival sorority, one that's open to any girl who would like to join. Elissa becomes a celebrity in her peer group when she exposes a Chi Kappa's unethical behavior during a television talk show. Both books have a bit of family life and more than a bit of just-begun love affairs. Not Sharmat's best, but better than most teenage series books.

D.V. Age-mate relations

Shaw, Diana. *Make the Most of a Good Thing: You!* Atlantic, 1986. ISBN 0-87113-039-4. 209p. \$13.95.

Ad
6-10 The information Shaw gives is accurate; the advice she gives is sensible (for the most part); and the style of writing and arrangement of material are clear and logical. The jacket states "What You Need to Know about Exercise, Diet, Stress, Sexuality, Relationships and More." Some readers may be disappointed because the amount of information about sexual problems is limited and not specific. A page on "Where to Go for Information About Sex" suggests asking a mother or doctor, or going to a planned parenthood clinic. However, there is not a listing of agencies that provide (in this or other areas) help or further information. There is no index to give access to the contents, although there is a divided bibliography. A minor weakness is the occasional easier-said-than-done advice; for example, in discussing the handling of stress, if your brother hurls snakes at you, "Get yourself to think of snakes as truly marvelous creatures. . . ." Uh-huh.

C.U. Health and hygiene

D.V. Social behavior

Shura, Mary Frances. *The Josie Gambit*. Dodd, 1986. ISBN 0-396-08810-4. 160p. \$10.95.

R
5-7 "A gambit," Greg explains at the start of his story, "is a very high-risk play you shouldn't try unless you're willing to live with the way the game turns out." Greg is twelve and has just come to stay with his grandmother for six months; Josie, the friend and neighbor whose grandfather had taught both of them to play chess, is delighted that he will be in her school and in its chess club. Her new friend Tory is inexplicably rude to Greg and soon begins being nasty to Josie as well. Shura does a fine job of deftly developing the mystery of Tory's odd behavior and its dramatic, sad ending, for Tory has indeed taken a chance that her gambit would bring her what she most wants—and she

loses. This has good pace, strong characters, good dialogue, and an original plot so well controlled by the author that drama never becomes melodrama.

D.V. Age-mate relations

Silverstein, Alvin. *World of the Brain*; written by Alvin and Virginia Silverstein. Morrow, 1986. ISBN 0-688-05777-2. 197p. \$11.75.

R
7-
* This is one of the best in the many good books on medical or biological subjects by the authors. It is serious, comprehensive, well-organized, and clearly written. It discusses the new tools that facilitate and expand the medical profession's ability to diagnose and treat illnesses that emanate from brain malfunction or that affect the brain; it describes in fine detail the brain's structure and its myriad functions; and it informs readers of the results of recent research. An index is provided, as are many photographs, drawings, and diagrams.

C.U. Biology; Science

Sullivan, George. *Pitcher*; illus. with photographs by the author and line drawings by Don Madden. Crowell, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04539-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04538-7. Library ed. \$10.89; Trade ed. \$10.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R
3-5 Photographs that expand the text and comic line drawings that may amuse (but give no information) illustrate a text that is logically arranged, simply written, and crisply informative. Sullivan, a practiced writer of sports information books, describes techniques for pitches, from grip to delivery, discusses strategy of play in different situations, and explains the need for communication with the catcher. All of the pictures and most of the references are to Little League play; the author's advice covers both general topics, such as attitude, and specific ones, such as the windup.

C.U. Recreation

Thomas, Karen. *Changing of the Guard*. Harper, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-026164-1; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-026163-3. 186p. Library ed. \$10.89; Trade ed. \$11.50.

Ad
6-8 Although her beloved grandfather has been dead for two years, Caroline, the sixteen-year-old narrator, still grieves so deeply that her loss colors any possibility of new relationships, and Grandpa's rigid ideas still dominate her thinking. Therefore it's hard for Caroline to respond to the overtures of a new friend, Maddy, without being suspicious and resentful. In this first novel, Thomas has given some contrast by presenting Caroline's other familial concerns (a father out of work, a grandmother becoming senile), and the concerns the protagonist has are ones with which readers can identify. Yet the story has several weak aspects: the pitch of the writing is a monotone, the paucity of action contributes to a slow pace, and Caroline's behavior seems inappropriately immature for a person of sixteen. Still, consistency of characterization and adequacy of writing style show the author's potential for growth.

D.V. Age-mate relations; Death, adjustment to; Friendship values

Turner, Anne Warren. *Street Talk*; illus. by Catherine Stock. Houghton, 1986. ISBN 0-395-39971-8. 47p. \$11.95.

R
2-4
* Turner's poetry is full of surprises, a rarity in children's verse. What she sees, the way she sees it, and the way she makes readers see it are full of fresh flashes—and funny sound effects for reading out loud as well. Some effects are light: "Pizza-pepper plucking/at my throat/(Hey-hot! hey-hot!)/fizzy Coke tickling/my nose (sssz-bam! sssz-bam!)." Some are soft: "I know the long nights, child,/crickets creaking in the grass/and the smell of magnolias/so thick you could cut/a dress out of it." The 29 poems are all free verse, but none of them lazy (the few less successful ones have an obvious theme, as in "Teacher Talk," with general observations replacing concrete images). There's also enough narrative content to hook readers reluctant to hear poetry.

A heightening of the everyday, this is illustrated with black-and-white woodcuts vibrant with lively shapes.

C.U. Reading aloud

D.V. Imaginative powers

Turner, Anne Warren. *Third Girl from the Left*. Macmillan, 1986. ISBN 0-02-789510-6. \$10.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R Sarah Goodhue, a plain, independent 18-year-old, leaves the small Maine town where
7-10 she has never fit in to become the mail-order bride of a rancher in the Montana Territory. Her journey is a hard one, her husband Alex a 60-year-old man who has deceived her with an old daguerreotype, and the ranch house bitter cold and lonely. Yet Sarah has begun to assert herself and has fallen in love with the mountains by the time her husband is killed in a round-up accident. With the Chinese cook and three ranch hands, Sarah decides to run the ranch. Although the opening scenes seem artificial, Sarah's experiences of adjustment are specifically and convincingly developed, including her ignorance and apprehension of marital sex, her slow-growing friendship with the Chinese cook, and her unexpected sense of loss when Alex dies. Reminiscent of Lampman's *Bargain Bride*, this is a woman's story solidly set in a man's old-West world.

C.U. History—U.S.—Frontier and pioneer life

D.V. Courage; Individuality, expressing; Sex roles

Tusa, Tricia. *Chicken*; written and illus. by Tricia Tusa. Macmillan, 1986. ISBN 0-02-789320-0. 28p. \$12.95.

R A deceptively simple fable carries off its message with witty aplomb in both text and
5-8 illustration. Fran Moran, a grizzled, dumpy, and endearing old woman, inadvertently
yrs. brings home a hatching egg. She names the chick Dooley Fenton III ("after my late uncle"), and she and Dooley become close friends. He escorts her to social events as an adornment on her festive hats. Yet Dooley is troubled by the fact that he can't fly, and when he checks into his identity via the dictionary, he is stunned to read "Chicken... adj... cowardly." Dooley's identity crisis leads him into some very odd behavior, until finally his love for Fran forces him into a brave statement—and resolution. Tusa's line-work is less frenetic here than in her *Miranda* but just as amusingly squiggly. The delicate colors serve as balance for the bizarre postures and kooky expressions of all the characters, especially the chicken. The wording is spare but telling, the logic sure, except ... isn't a male chicken called a rooster?

Ure, Jean. *The Most Important Thing*; illus. by Ellen Eagle. Morrow, 1986. ISBN 0-688-05859-0. \$11.75. Reviewed from galleys.

R In a sequel to *Supermouse*, Ure continues the story of two sisters who are proficient
5-7 in the performing arts: smug and cloying little Rose (who loves to watch her own TV commercials) and Nicola, who is daring to hope that her proficiency at ballet will enable her to enter a fine (mythical) ballet school. Everybody thinks Nicola should seize her chance when it comes except her boyfriend Denny, who would miss her; her science teacher, who thinks Nicola would be a fine doctor; and her father, who fears she is losing the chance to choose a lifelong profession to pursue a beloved but impermanent avocation. Anxious as she has been to get into the ballet school, Nicola finds that she really would prefer a science program, and she courageously faces the dismay of her friends and the wrath of her mother. The latter is Ure's best portrayal, an archetypal but highly individual dragon of a stage mother. This isn't strong in plot, but it has excellent characterization, with interesting relationships (Nicola's love/hate feelings about her simpering sister, or her feelings about Denny, who is black) and a smooth writing style that has dialogue and that falls naturally on the ear.

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Interracial understanding; Occupational orientation; Self-confidence

Watkins, Yoko Kawashima. *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*. Lothrop, 1986. ISBN 0-688-06110-9. \$10.25. Reviewed from galleys.

R 1945 when she was eleven, living with her parents and an older brother and sister in
7- Korea. Most Koreans bitterly resented Japanese rule so the Kawashimas, like other
Japanese residing in North Korea, were in grave danger. This is the often-harrowing
account of their flight from their home, a journey that began with a long march for the
three women, separated from father and brother, and that often included incidents of
brutality and harrowing cruelty. Eventually the two girls, after getting to Japan, adjust
to their mother's death, ostracism at school, and dire poverty. They learn to fend for
themselves and are reunited with their brother and with a kindly man they had met in
Korea. Effective, affective, candid, and compelling as personal history, this is a testa-
ment to the resilience of the young and a reminder that in war we are all losers.

D.V. Courage; Family relations; Self-reliance

Whitaker, Alexandra. *Dream Sister*. Houghton, 1986. ISBN 0-395-39377-9. \$12.95. Reviewed
from galleys.

Ad Ann is ten, and her five-year-old sister Isabelle is the bane of her existence. Isabelle is
3-5 sweet and pretty and loving (she adores Ann), and their mother can't understand why
Ann is so unkind to her baby sister. It may not surprise readers to find, at the end of the
story, that the mysterious dream sister who comes in night imagery is Isabelle; Ann's
instant conversion to loving sibling is not quite convincing. Save for that weakness and
an occasional lag in the pace, this is fairly impressive for a first novel, having competent
characterization and being written with animation.

D.V. Jealousy, overcoming

Woolverton, Linda. *Star Wind*. Houghton, 1986. ISBN 0-395-41454-7. 181p. \$12.95.

M Arriving home from summer camp, Camden discovers that her best friend Mitch has
5-8 changed, hanging out with the "Kidsters" led by the mysterious WT-3. Gathering in a
deserted hotel at Venice Beach, the Kidsters, with the aid of WT-3's magic cube, go on
phantasmagorical trips through time and space. At the same time, Camden begins to
have strange dreams of a world run by The Teacher, who demands words as fealty,
locking up those (with the aid of the "Word Police") who cannot pay the Word Tax. As
the Kidsters fall more and more under the spell of WT-3, they lose their abilities to talk
and read because (as is too soon apparent to readers) WT-3 is an agent for The Teacher,
stealing words from around the universe. While there is a refreshing humor in Woolver-
ton's depiction of Camden, the theme is oppressively didactic, and the overstated con-
clusion (when brave Camden gives The Teacher what-for) comes about through con-
trivance, with the aid of Camden's cat, whose supernatural powers are never quite
convincing.

Wosmek, Frances. *A Brown Bird Singing*. Lothrop, 1986. ISBN 0-688-06251-2. \$10.25.
Reviewed from galleys.

Ad Anego, a Chippewa Indian, had been living with the Veselkas since her mother had
4-6 died; her father, Hamigeeseck, had left her with this white family, so that she could
have a better life. The only Native American in a small (mostly Swedish) community,
Anego loved Mama and Pa and could hardly remember her real father. In fact, her
greatest fear was that he would take her away. There are tangential incidents in the
story, but it focuses on Anego's fear and on her acceptance of Hamigeeseck when he
does show up—but the development of the plot is slow. In the end, her father agrees
that she may stay with the Veselkas, and, in a final episode, he puts a wild bird in her
hand; it reminds her of an incident faintly remembered from her childhood, and it sym-
bolizes her own situation. The author deals adequately with Anego's conflict; although
her feelings of inferiority may be natural in the circumstance, they seem irrationally

strong, since they ename from chiefly from the repeated taunts and slurs of a classmate who is described as her best friend.

D.V. Parent-child relations

Yolen, Jane, ed. *Dragons and Dreams: A Collection of New Fantasy and Science Fiction Stories*; ed. by Jane Yolen, Martin H. Greenberg, and Charles G. Waugh. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-026793-3; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-026792-5. 180p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$12.50..

R
5-8 A small compendium of magical tales comprises one that was previously published, Charles de Lint's folk-like story of a Scottish bodach, "Laughter in the Leaves," and nine stories written for this volume. Very nice they are, too, although Bruce Coville's "The Box," the story of a gift from an angel, is rather tepid. However, Yolen's own contribution, and the short stories by Diana Wynne Jones, Patricia MacLachlan, and Zilpha Keatley Snyder, are fine examples of this literary form, deftly constructed and smoothly written. A section of brief notes about the authors is appended.

Yue, Charlotte. *The Pueblo*; written and illus. by Charlotte and David Yue. Houghton, 1986. ISBN 0-395-385350-1. 117p. \$12.95.

Ad
4-6 Profusely illustrated with drawings that rarely have captions or labels, this is a book that gives a great deal of specific, detailed information but that is weakened by repetition. For example, "A house could be added... as more space was needed..." on page 4, and on page 26, "Houses could be added as more space was needed." The arrangement of material is adequate save for such recurrence and for the occasional inclusion of material that seems inappropriate, such as several paragraphs on traditional tasks of males and females in a chapter entitled "Structure of Pueblo Dwellings." Still, this gives enough information on the construction and use of various kinds of pueblos to satisfy curious readers, and also gives some historical background and describes the cultural patterns of pueblo dwellers. The writing has not infrequent awkward phrases but is usually direct and comprehensible. A bibliography (brief), a list of sources (lengthy), and an index are included.

C.U. History—U.S.

Zerman, Melvyn Bernard. *Taking on the Press: Constitutional Rights in Conflict*. Crowell, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04302-3; Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04301-5. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R
8-12 A densely compressed analysis of the sometimes inherent conflict between the First Amendment and the rights to fair trial, privacy, and protection of government security documents. Zerman opens with the 1971 Quarterman case, in which a high school student won his suit against school authorities' unconstitutional use of proper restraint in suppressing distribution of a student paper. Other landmark decisions include Carol Burnett's suit of the National Enquirer, a New York reporter's investigation of the Riverdell Hospital murder cases leading to court orders violating his sources' confidentiality, and the New York Times exposure of the Pentagon papers. The close detail and complexity of issues make this heavy reading straight through, but it's an excellent research source, a bridge between more generalized juvenile overviews and adult books that focus on any one of the specific cases described. A forward by Dan Rather, a bibliography, and an index are included.

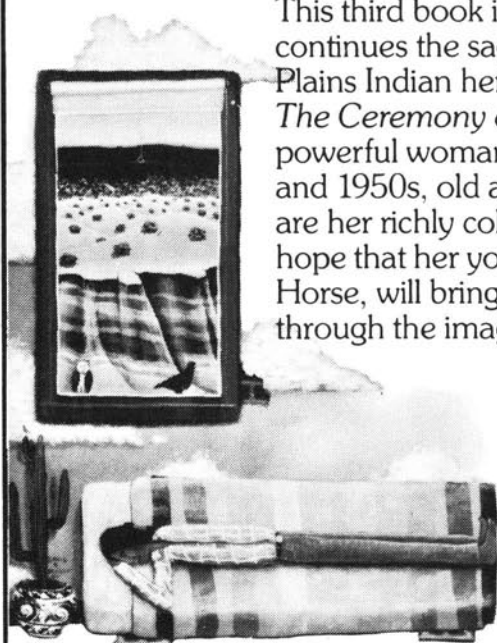
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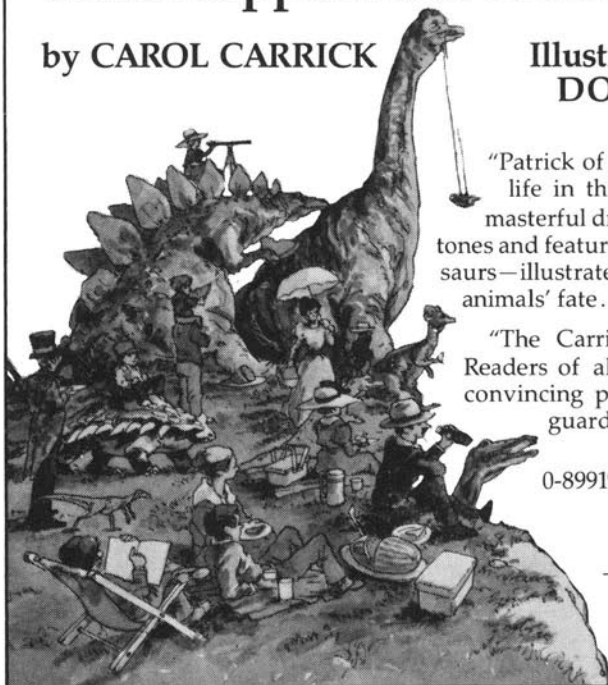
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